

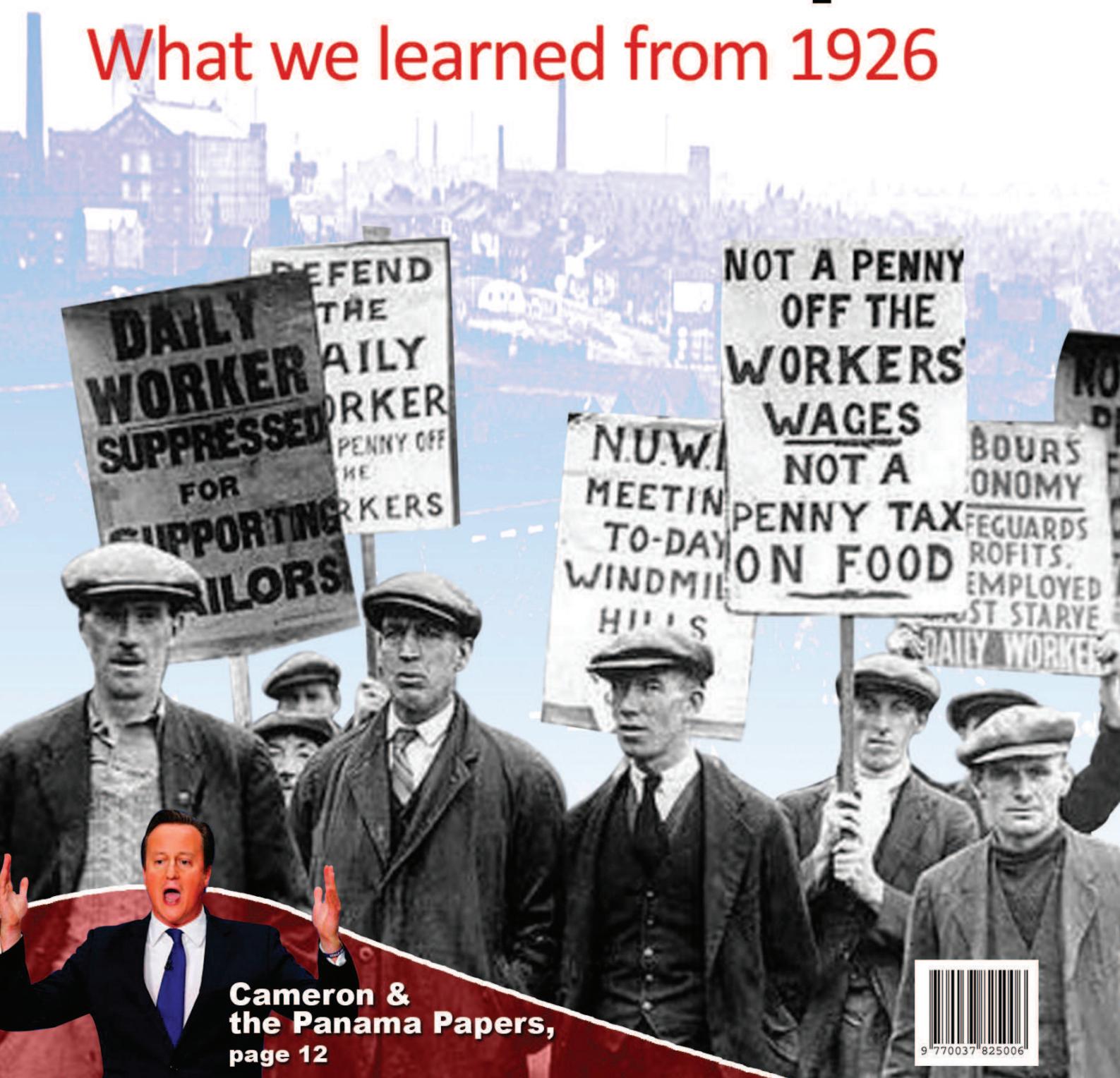
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The Strike Weapon

What we learned from 1926



**Cameron &
the Panama Papers,
page 12**

socialist standard

Contents May 2016

Features

5 The Availability Heuristic

Logical thinking for an illogical age

10 The Panama Papers

What the big leak told us about the rich

12 The General Strike 1926

What are the pros and cons of striking as a weapon of class war?

14 Socialism and Climate Change

There are things society could do, but will it?

16 Making Nationalists

Ireland 100 years after the Easter Rising



12

10



14

patch up capitalism.

We use every possible opportunity to make new socialists. We publish pamphlets and books, as well as CDs, DVDs and various other informative material. We also give talks and take part in debates; attend rallies, meetings and demos; run educational conferences; host internet discussion forums, make films presenting our ideas, and contest elections when practical. Socialist literature is available in Arabic,

Bengali, Dutch, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

The more of you who join the Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our ideas across, the more experiences we will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

The Socialist Party is an organisation of equals. There is no leader and there are no followers. So, if you are going to join we want you to be sure that you agree fully with what we stand for and that we are satisfied that you understand the case for socialism.

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Regulars

4 Pathfinders

5 Letters

6 Halo Halo!

6 Cooking the Books 1

7 Greasy Pole

9 Material World

17 Cooking the Books 2

19 Proper Gander

20 Reviews

22 50 Years Ago

22 Action Replay

23 Meetings

24 Rear View

24 Free Lunch



16

Introducing the Socialist Party

The Socialist Party is like no other political party in Britain. It is made up of people who have joined together because we want to get rid of the profit system and establish real socialism. Our aim is to persuade others to become socialist and act for themselves, organising democratically and without leaders, to bring about the kind of society that we are advocating in this journal. We are solely concerned with building a movement of socialists for socialism. We are not a reformist party with a programme of policies to



Editorial

EU referendum: an irrelevant sideshow

WE FACE months of debate over Britain staying in or leaving the European Union. It is already dominating headlines and all political discussions, yet it is not the most pressing issue facing us by a long shot.

In the UK thousands of early deaths each year are related to poor diet, fuel poverty and inequality. Wages have only just returned to the same value they had in 2008, before the Great Crash, and are growing slowly. 1.7 million people are unemployed (according to official statistics) and millions more are working in insecure and stressful jobs.

In reality, it doesn't matter for the vast majority of us, yet the politicians and journalists are full of discussions about whether or not Britain should be part of the EU.

Those who own the productive wealth of society aren't going to willingly let their capital lie idle. In or out of the EU, they will need workers and seek profits in pretty much the same way. They will always seek to make the most profit they can, and they

will need the labour of those of us who work to make their profits for them.

In order to do business, there will have to be arrangements with other governments, especially those that neighbour Britain. Pretty much all free trade agreements have an arbitration process, which will mean courts telling the British government what to do in order to comply with the treaties it signed.

They'll still need to ensure that goods and workers can get from A to B without massive queues, delays and bureaucracy. The only countries with truly controlled borders are the likes of Cuba and North Korea, whose examples are hardly worth following.

The owners of capital will still try to ensure that they get privileged access to the corridors of power, so that the rules and terms of trade are in their favour. Most of us will continue to have as little control over the laws of the land as before.

Worldwide millions die due to lack of available medical services. Starvation

exists in the midst of plenty of food. Anthropogenic climate change is changing eco-systems across the world. Millions are displaced by war. These are human problems, that we must confront on a worldwide scale.

If we want practical control of our own lives, if we want to confront these problems, we have to organise on a worldwide basis, not a national basis. We need to join with the vast majority of the world who do not own it, in order to bring the wealth of the world under the democratic control of everyone, rather than taking sides in a factional dispute between members of the propertied class.

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Capitalism's war on the war on drugs

IT MAY come as a surprise to some that the Tory government has since the coalition years been promoting the idea of 'evidence-based policy' and using it as a buzz-phrase in their publications. Insofar as they are genuinely pursuing this laudable aim we could hardly object. But are they?

Not according to anyone who's looked at the terms of the new Psychoactive Substances Act, which blanket-bans anything 'intended for human consumption that is capable of producing a psychoactive effect' and which was due to come into force on 6 April (gov.uk/government/collections/psychoactive-substances-bill-2015).

The Act has already hit a major snag, forcing the commencement date to be postponed, with no new date set. The problem is that the government has offered no meaningful and unambiguous definition of the term 'psychoactive'. The result is that ministers don't know exactly what they are banning, which means that the police can't enforce the Act (politics.co.uk 30 March).

But surely the government, committed to 'evidence-based policy', would have sought the advice of its own Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, which was set up over 40 years ago in order – theoretically – to provide the scientific case for the war on drugs? The problem here is that, ever since the days of ACMD chairman David Nutt, who was famously sacked by New Labour for stating that taking ecstasy was less dangerous than horse-riding and for describing government drug policy as 'beyond absurd', the government has not trusted

the ACMD to toe the line and has cut them out of all consultation on the new Act. This despite the fact that 'It is actually a legal requirement set out in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 that the ACMD must be consulted before alterations to the Act or new legislation is brought in' (bbc.co.uk/news/uk-33079042). Not surprisingly, members of the ACMD were reported to be 'furious'.

Health campaigners have, also not surprisingly, ridiculed the illogic of a universal ban on relatively harmless drugs while exempting some of the worst,

notably alcohol and tobacco. But Mike Penning, the minister responsible for the bill, was ebulliently unapologetic: 'We will ensure that we insert what we want to insert [into the exemption list], while at the same time having a blanket ban'. Insurrection duly followed from the Tory benches over the use of amyl nitrate 'poppers', which are highs and muscle relaxants popular among gays and which now were threatened with criminalisation.

'Sometimes when something is proposed which becomes personal to you, you realise the government is about to do something fantastically stupid' said Crispin Blunt, gay Tory MP and popper-user, in a Commons speech in January which served to create an embarrassing association between banning party drugs and homophobia (*Telegraph*, 20 January). After further lambasting from the Labour benches the government retreated in some confusion and instructed the ACMD to find a way to get poppers onto the exemption register in order to avoid a back-bench mutiny. The almost equally mutinous ACMD, commanded to produce 'evidence' in support of a stupid Act but to keep silent otherwise, duly obliged with a technical fudge arguing that as poppers mainly affect blood vessels and do not directly target brain cells they couldn't be said to cause a genuine psychoactive effect (*New Scientist*, 2 April). The fact that this is pseudo-science-sounding-codswallop is abundantly obvious to any popper user getting the instant highs, and often the banging headaches afterwards.

This draconian and ill-conceived Act isn't just illegally-drafted scientific nonsense, it's really the last desperate cheer in the UK for one of capitalism's biggest avoidable own-goals, the 'war on drugs'.

The bigger picture

Worldwide, state anti-drug policies are in total disarray. While China, Russia and remarkably, Sweden, are trying gamely to stay hard-line on prohibition, the Americas are in the process of hoisting the white flag, at least in the case of cannabis, by far the world's most popular illicit drug. After years of decriminalisation, California is set to legalise cannabis this November, after Colorado in 2014 and Washington DC in 2015. Federal regulation is expected within five years, while Canada has already announced plans to create its own regulated cannabis market in 2017. Uruguay 'went legal' in 2013 and other South American countries including Argentina and Ecuador are likely to follow suit. The Czech Republic legalised 'medicinal' marijuana in 2013, and Germany is soon embarking on a huge medicinal cannabis programme. Spain, Italy and Australia will probably do the

same. The World Health Organisation came out in support in 2014. In the UK, cannabis-related arrests have fallen by 50 percent since 2010 and several police commissioners have stated that they will not arrest users or growers of small amounts. The Lib Dems, with the reckless daring of the electorally doomed, are proposing a new Cannabis Regulation Authority to oversee a legal retail industry (politics.co.uk 20 April). As things stand, however, Labour and Tories in general still see drug liberalisation as political suicide.

Even in its own terms, capitalism has done some bizarre things, and prohibition must count among the most logic-defying, because it has forced a decoupling of the capitalist market from capitalist legislation, thereby shutting down the normal operations of capitalist production (including quality control) and instead opening up an entirely unregulated black market, a kind of 'dark capitalism', which is today worth around \$500bn globally, more than the market value of Google or Microsoft. This has in turn produced a global disaster of racketeering and murder that dwarfs what happened in Al Capone's time. The policing cost to the ruling class has been staggering, but the cost in deaths is even more so. Mexico's average life-span has actually lowered due to the gigantic number of drug-related deaths (*New Scientist*, 9 April). Whoever has been winning the war on drugs, it isn't governments, it isn't the (licit) capitalist class and it certainly isn't workers either.

Uncelebrated centenary

The history of drug prohibition has nothing to do with science and everything to do with racism and anti-worker condescension by governing classes. Drugs were first banned in the UK in 1916 under the 1914 Defence of the Realm Act, after a moral panic about drugs in the front line. But where post-war bans on alcohol failed quickly due to its universal popularity, the prohibition on other, relatively niche narcotics, remained sustainable until globalisation in modern times has created a Frankenstein's monster.

Exactly a century later, the signs are that capitalism is beginning to realise what it's missing out on, and is not going to allow its own legislation – which normally exists to protect it – to continue getting in its way. How to sell this enormous policy U-turn to voters who have grown up being brainwashed by government propaganda against drugs is currently the problem proving precisely too much for Cameron and his Tories, or for many Labourites hoping for re-election, but there's no doubt where the smart money wants to go next.

PJS



The Availability Heuristic

Logical thinking, and how to do it

'What we're facing in Iraq now with Isis is a greater and deeper threat to our security than we have known before.'

David Cameron, 29 August 2014.

A common cognitive bias is the availability heuristic - this is the tendency to create a picture of the world using the elements that most easily come to mind. When assessing risk we will most likely give much more attention to sensational dramatic events than to more commonplace, but less spectacular, happenings. Striking and emotive stories stick more in our mind causing us to ignore, forget or downplay the larger, but more abstract, picture presented by statistical evidence. Repeated media reports of violence will lead to people thinking that the world is much more dangerous than it actually is, since violent acts leave a vivid and quickly recallable picture in the mind, this being one of the reasons that acts of terror are committed in the first place. To avoid falling foul of this heuristic we need to remember that events do not happen more often just because we can think of them more readily, we should be prepared to question any initial conclusions that come to mind.

So, whilst media coverage and public perception of terrorist threat appears to be on the rise, is the UK really facing a greater terrorist threat than it ever has known before? According to the Conflict Archive on the Internet, a website that documents



'the troubles' in Northern Ireland, since the late sixties there have been 36,000 shooting incidents and over 10,000 bomb explosions, with more than 3,500 people killed, 1,707 of them by the IRA. So whilst it is true there has been a recent upsurge in Islamist inspired terrorism, this has yet to reach levels anything like those previously experienced, the total death count from Islamist inspired terrorism in the UK is currently less than 60.

Yet there has been an area in recent years that has seen a rise in deaths, but as it is largely hidden from view its presence weighs little on the public mind. Excess winter deaths (the amount of deaths occurring in winter months compared to the average amount of deaths in non-winter months) are at a 15 year high. Between December 2014 and March 2015 there were

almost 44,000 of these excess deaths – the largest annual rise in almost five decades. Part of the reason for the increase has been put down to the flu vaccine being not as effective as in previous years but the background story is one of poor housing, poverty and pensioners who can't afford to pay for heating.

So rather than being at risk from an unprecedented threat of Jihadi terrorism, it is the more mundane features of society, such as inadequate provisioning for the elderly that are the real killers. But as these victims die silently and in private, and because of the availability heuristic, they are unlikely to come to mind when thinking about threats to life.

DJP



Summer School

22nd - 24th July 2016

Fircroft College, Birmingham

Money flows through every aspect of society, and therefore affects every aspect of our lives. What possessions we have, the efficiency of the services we use, and how we are supposed to value ourselves are all shaped by the money system.

We're encouraged to think of the economy in much the same way as we think about the weather – something changeable, but always there. When the climate is 'good', life feels brighter. When the climate is 'bad', we huddle down until we can ride out the storm. Although we'll always have the weather, the economy doesn't have to be permanent.

Our weekend of talks and discussion looks at the role of money in our society. In what ways does money affect how we think

and behave? How does the economy really function? How did money come to be such a dominant force? We also look forward to a moneyless socialist society, which will be – in more than one sense of the word – free.

Talks include:

Janet Surman discusses a moneyless society: 'Profiting From A Moneyless World'

Adam Buick presents 'An Idiot's Guide To Banking: How To Avoid Being A Currency Crank'.

Full residential cost (including accommodation and meals Friday evening to Sunday afternoon) is £100. The concessionary rate is £50. Day visitors are welcome, but please book in advance.

To book a place, send a cheque (payable to the Socialist Party of Great Britain) to Summer School, Sutton Farm, Aldborough, Boroughbridge, York, YO51 9ER, or book online through the QR code or at <http://spgb.net/summerschool2016>. E-mail enquiries to spgbsschool@yahoo.co.uk

Christian Values

MARGARET THATCHER used to lie awake at night and fantasise about 'Victorian values' and how, if only they could be reintroduced, the working class would learn to know their place. These days, however, since there are few cotton mills or coal mines remaining where small children in rags can be put to work for six days a week, or cheery young urchins for that matter, who for a crust of bread can be forced up chimneys to clear them of soot, it's not an idea we hear so much about.

What we need now, we are told, are 'Christian values', and although there is some confusion, especially amongst those who recommend them, as to what they actually are, they probably amount to pretty much the same thing. And their big advantage is that they can be bandied about as the cure for everything from the perilous state of the NHS and the steel industry to street beggars.

So for David Cameron's Easter message to the Tory faithful, delivered just after the Islamic terrorist bombing in Brussels, and another one targeting a children's playground in Lahore even as he finished speaking, what better way to assure everyone that he, and God, were still in control than a rousing speech on good old

'Christian values'?

We, in the UK, must 'stand together and defend' these values in the face of threats from terrorism he said. And he singled out 'Responsibility, hard work, compassion and pride in working for the common good' as the kind of values that Christians, or at least Tory ones, hold and are in danger of being blasted out of existence by Isis.

Had he consulted his bible, he would have found God held a whole range of very different values, and he didn't hesitate to exercise them when dealing with anyone who annoyed him – the Amalakites, for example. He told Saul to 'utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass'(1 Samuel. 15 v3-4). You can see where that other God, the ISIS one, gets his ideas from can't you?

We can perhaps make allowances for Cameron's shaky grasp of 'Christian values' though.

Although he once described himself as being a 'committed' Christian, he admitted that he was only a 'vaguely practising' one, and was 'full of doubts' on the big issues.

One big issue he may have wrestled with would have been tax avoidance schemes for the rich, which only a few weeks ago he slammed as being 'totally unacceptable' and 'morally wrong'.

Imagine his theological uncertainties when the 'Panama Papers' tax avoidance scandal came to light and it emerged that his father, whose fortune was estimated in the 2009 *Sunday Times Rich List* at £10 million, had made his fortune in offshore funds in Panama and Geneva, and that he, too had benefitted from these.

Fortunately after much soul searching and examining his 'Christian values' he was able to explain that although such schemes for the rich may be slightly 'totally unacceptable' and perhaps even a tiny bit 'morally wrong', they were perfectly legal, and anyway, his father's financial affairs were 'a private matter'.

NW



Traditional Christian values: French reenactment of the First Crusade



THE CAPITALIST class is not a monolithic block with a single interest. They are united of course in wanting capitalism to continue and a government to enforce their ownership, but beyond that it's a mass of often conflicting sectional interests of particular groups, industries and firms. An important role of governments is to arbitrate between these conflicting interests.

The current crisis in the British steel industry is a case in point. Tata, the India-based capitalist conglomerate which owned the Port Talbot steelworks (which shows that capitalism is international and that the Leninist theory that imperialist Britain exploits capitalist India is nonsense – they're all in it together), wanted to dispose of it as it wasn't making a profit. In fact it was said to have been making a loss of £1 million a day. No capitalist firm is going to put up with that for long.

The reason why Tata's Port Talbot works had not been making a profit is that it was not 'competitive', i.e. could

not produce steel at a cost below the price they would get from selling it. This was not because its production costs had gone up but because the world market price of steel has fallen. As the *Times* (30 March) pointed out, there is 'a global glut of supply. Capacity utilisation in the global steel industry is just 66 per cent.'

This glut, and overcapacity and overproduction (in relation to market demand not needs), is a manifestation of the world economic slump that followed the Great Crash of 2008, from which the world economic has not yet fully recovered.

China too has a surplus steel-producing capacity. The policy its rulers have adopted to try to recover some at least of the money invested in its steel industry has been to sell its steel below its cost of production. In short, dumping. This is not allowed under international trade agreements or, rather, if one country does it, others are permitted to retaliate by imposing or increasing tariffs. This is what the EU wanted to do, but this was blocked by some member-states, including Britain. But why? Didn't the British government want to protect the British steel industry? In a word, No. They didn't want a higher tariff as this would

put up the price of steel in Europe and so increase the production costs of industries consuming steel.

The BBC reported (1 April): 'The European Steel Association said the UK had been blocking an EU measure which would have tackled the "dumping" of cheap Chinese steel in Europe, which is partly being blamed for the crisis. (...) The UK has argued against higher tariffs, saying they would hit other sectors such as the car industry, which import a lot of foreign steel.' The *Times* that day added: 'Mr Javid confirmed his opposition last month, saying that it could hurt consumers and other businesses using steel products.'

Explaining this to the Port Talbot steelworkers was never going to be easy. Business Secretary Sajid Javid came across more as the investment banker he once was than as an astute politician. But he gets full marks for honesty when he told the Engineering Employers Federation:

'We have to recognise what government can do and what it can't. There is a huge overcapacity and a fall in world demand and we can't change that' (*Times*, 31 March).

Precisely.

In Europe or out? Do you care?

IN EUROPE or Out? Do You Care?

The events of this not-so-merry month of May have filled quite a few pages in quite a few diaries. There was the opportunity to juggle with the names of a ragbag of claimants to be Representatives of the People about the varying styles of organising local councils. Which led on to The Big One – the June Referendum to decide would British capitalism grope more fluently as part of a European combine – calling itself a Union even when unity is clearly absent from the relationships within it. This dispute has been bubbling along for some time, fertilising a number of groups such as Remain (for the Union) or Leave (against).

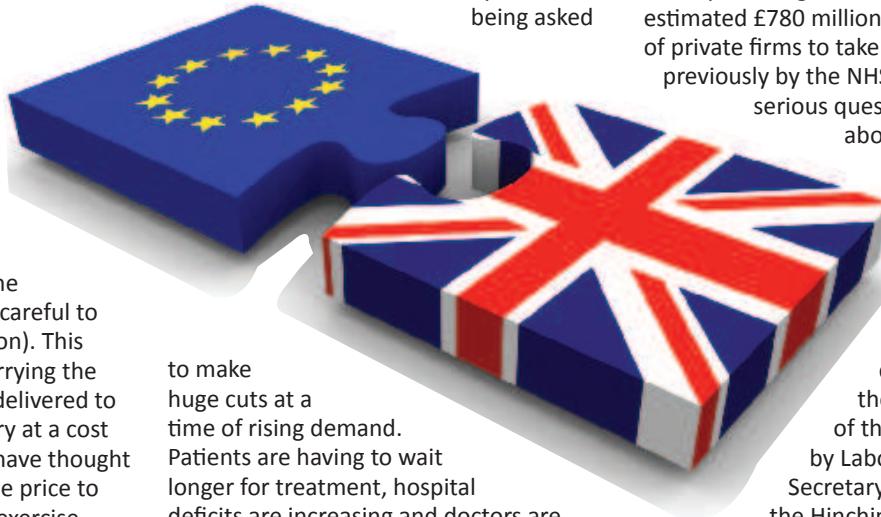
Pamphlet

In time for the Referendum the government produced a 14-page pamphlet which, apart from its absorbing photographs of things like a full supermarket basket and an untidy kitchen table, set out a case for Britain remaining within the EU (which Cameron is always careful to insist will be a 'reformed' Union). This was an official publication, carrying the government crest and it was delivered to every household in the country at a cost of 34p each and some might have thought that this was a very reasonable price to pay for so comprehensive an exercise in falsehood. The official excuse for the cost and the work involved was that the leaflet was in response to the results of a recent survey in which some 85 percent of the public expressed a need for the full facts about the Referendum. On the other side of the argument Boris Johnson blabbered a protest much as expected from him: it was, he said, 'crazy' that the government should spend such a lot of money in such a cause: 'Given that I think it's very likely it will be very biased and hysterical and warning unnecessarily about the risks of leaving the EU, I think it's a complete waste of money'. Which might have been more convincing except that Johnson is always liable to promote his political ambitions by speeches which can most suitably be pigeonholed as biased, hysterical and a waste of valuable resources. In any case the leaflet states a case which in many respects he should

agree with: Britain will not join the Euro; will keep its own border controls; will impose tough new restrictions on migrants' access to the welfare system.

Leak

Meanwhile a well-publicised example of the propaganda style and tactics at work in the current dispute emerged from the other side – the so-called Brexit camp. This was in the form of an email from one Cleo Watson which saw the light of day through being leaked by, it was rumoured, Michael Gove, close ally and friend of David Cameron who once consoled him by naming him Lord Chancellor and Minister of Justice. But now Gove is opposing Cameron, he is among the Vote Leave camp and notoriously alert to involve himself in any act of ungrateful subversion. Cleo Watson asked senior NHS staff to support a letter, to be published a few days later, which argued that while the NHS is 'a great British institution that families rely on ...it is being asked



to make huge cuts at a time of rising demand. Patients are having to wait longer for treatment, hospital deficits are increasing and doctors are on strike after being told they must take a pay cut ... To stay in the EU would be incentive for the government to 'starve the NHS of its necessary financial support – as Cameron and Hunt have done in the past. There is in this episode more than a suggestion of irony. But it cannot be ignored that members of the Vote Leave group who rely on the current NHS crisis for ammunition were recently on the other side, arguing that a sustainable Health Service demanded deeper cuts, restricted service, fewer doctors and nurses and longer waiting lists.

PFI

Cleo Watson presents herself as having skills in Strategic Communications in political campaigns which she has applied in jobs such as her recent – very brief – period as an intern for Michael Gove (whether that included responsibility

for leaking documents is not known). Her boss at the Vote Leave campaign is Matthew Elliott, a regular advocate of cutting government spending, including those which he agrees would entail '...a painful process for public service workers'. A previous practitioner of this policy was the Blair government which applied the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) policy of encouraging private investment in, among other concerns, the NHS. In 2001 Jon Sussex of the Office of Health Economics recalled that in May 1997 the Blair government 'enthusiastically advanced PFI in all parts of the public sector'. Between then and 2001 some 85 percent of the funding of major NHS capital projects came from private sources, with PFI expanding from new hospital buildings to services such as information technology, scanners and so on. This policy was carried on by the Tory government under the 2012 Health and Social Care Act, so that in April 2015 the Minister of Health Jeremy Hunt signed a deal worth an estimated £780 million with a number of private firms to take over work done previously by the NHS. But there were serious questions to be asked about some of those firms. Vanguard had been in trouble over a programme of 'rushed' operations with serious complications for the patients. In one of the last PFI decisions by Labour's Health Secretary Andy Burnham the Hinchingbrooke Hospital in Cambridgeshire was handed over to Circle Healthcare, which in January 2015 was trying to withdraw after being assessed as 'inadequate' and itself rating the deal as 'no longer financially viable'.

The present Referendum about European Union is not the first. In 1975 the Wilson government organised one which resulted in a 67 percent vote in favour of membership of the European Economic Community. But since then enough problems have accumulated to cause another vote. Which should encourage all who participate to reflect on the mass of evidence about the persistent chaos of capitalism in Europe and across the world and to consider some response other than obediently opting for one side or the other in a contest between two disasters.

IVAN

UK BRANCHES & CONTACTS

LONDON

North London branch. Meets 3rd Thurs. 8pm at Torriano Meeting House, 99 Torriano Ave, NW5 2RX. Contact: 020 7609 0983 chris.dufton@talktalk.net

South London branch. Meets 1st Tues. 7pm. Head Office, 52 Clapham High St, SW4 7UN. Contact: 020 7622 3811.

West London branch. Meets 1st & 3rd Tues. 8pm. Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace (corner Sutton Court Rd), W4. Corres: 51 Gayford Road, London W12 9BY. Contact: 020 8740 6677. tennen@abelgratis.com

MIDLANDS

West Midlands regional branch. Meets last Sun. 3pm, the Briar Rose pub, 25 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham B2 5RE. (Check before attending). Contact: vincent. otter@globalnet.co.uk. 01242 675357.

East Midlands. Contact: Gareth Whitley, gwhitley@hotmail.co.uk

NORTH

Northeast branch. Contact: Vin Maratty, 22 Greystoke Avenue, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR2 9DS. vinmaratty@googlemail.com. 01915 250 002.

Lancaster branch. Meets 3rd Sun. 3pm. Contact: P. Shannon, 10 Green Street, Lancaster LA1 1DZ. 01524 382380 spgb.lancaster@worldsocialism.org.

Manchester branch. Contact: Paul Bennett, 6 Burleigh Mews, Hardy Lane, M21 7LB. 0161 860 7189.

Southeast Manchester. Contact: Blanche Preston, 68 Fountains Road, M32 9PH.

Bolton. Contact: H. McLaughlin. 01204 844589.

Cumbria. Contact: Brendan Cummings, 19 Queen St, Millom, Cumbria LA18 4BG.

Yorkshire regional branch. Contact: Edward Craggs, Sutton Farm, Aldborough, Boroughbridge, Yorkshire, YO51 9ER. 01423 322781. ralph.craggs@gmail.com.

SOUTH/SOUTHEAST/SOUTHWEST

Kent and Sussex regional branch. Meets 2nd Sun. 2pm at The Muggleton Inn, High Street, Maidstone ME14 1HJ. Contact: spgb.ksrb@worldsocialism.org 07973 142701.

South West regional branch. Meets 2nd Sat

of even months. Railway Tavern, Salisbury, 2pm (check before attending). Contact: Shane Roberts, 86 High Street, Bristol BS5 6DN. 0117 9511199.

Brighton Discussion Group. Contact: Anton Pruden, anton@pruden.me

Canterbury. Contact: Rob Cox, 4 Stanhope Road, Deal, Kent, CT14 6AB.

Luton. Contact: Nick White, 59 Heywood Drive, LU2 7LP.

Redruth. Contact: Harry Sowden, 5 Clarence Villas, Redruth, Cornwall, TR15 1PB. 01209 219293.

East Anglia regional branch. Meets 2nd Sat. on alternate months (see 'Meetings' for details).

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Cambridge. Contact: Andrew Westley, 10 Marksby Close, Duxford, Cambridge CB2 4RS. 07890343044.

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Newtownabbey. Contact: Nigel McCullough. 028 90852062.

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh branch. Meets 1st Thurs. 7-9pm. The Quaker Hall, Victoria Terrace (above Victoria Street), Edinburgh. Contact: J. Moir. 0131 440 0995. JIMMY@jmoir29.freemail.co.uk. Branch website: <http://geocities.com/edinburghbranch/>

Glasgow branch. Meets 3rd Weds. at 8pm in Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow. Contact: Peter Hendrie, 75 Lairhills Road, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 0LH. 01355 903105. peter.anna.hendrie@blueyonder.co.uk.

Dundee. Contact: Ian Ratcliffe, 12 Finlow Terrace, Dundee, DD4 9NA. 01382 698297.

Ayreshire. Contact: Paul Edwards 01563 541138. rainbow3@btopenworld.com.

Lothian Socialist Discussion @Autonomous Centre Edinburgh, ACE, 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA. Meets 4th Weds.

7-9pm. Contact: F.Anderson 07724 082753.

WALES

Swansea branch. Meets 2nd Mon, 7.30pm, Unitarian Church, High Street. Contact: Geoffrey Williams, 19 Baptist Well Street, Waun Wen, Swansea SA1 6FB. 01792 643624.

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St Kilda and Socialism

The last native resident of St Kilda died in April. This remote part of Britain used to practise a communistic society.



SOCIALISTS, WHEN asked about examples of common ownership and control in action, often refer to peoples who live or lived in a social system that we term 'primitive communism', often tribes in the Amazonian rainforest. Yet 110 miles west of the Scottish mainland there are a small cluster of islands known as St Kilda, inhabited for at least two millennia and with a population probably never exceeding 180, where a form of primitive communism prevailed.

In theory St Kilda was part of Scotland but it was effectively overlooked. The Inland Revenue never attempted to impose taxation, and the inhabitants of St Kilda were never invited to register on an



St Kilda islanders, 1887

electoral roll. No crime was ever officially recorded. No one from St Kilda was called up into the armed forces. Until the nineteenth century money was not used on St Kilda. On the islands the islanders had developed a self-sufficient communal economy based on seabirds (meat, oil and eggs), Soay sheep, fishing, and some small scale crofting.

On the whole the people were left free to develop their own type of society. The outcome was a form of communism in which decisions affecting the whole community were taken in a collective manner (though only by the men), work

was assigned on the basis of individual skills, and there was no private property apart from accommodation, furniture, and other personal items. The community made sure that those who were sick, disabled, or elderly could live at the same standard as anyone else. A large proportion of the communal work involved the catching of sea birds and the gathering of eggs. After a day capturing fulmars, for example, all the dead birds would be placed on a large pile, and then distributed to each family according to the size of the family. Men who returned with especially large quantities of fulmars would receive the same share as any other.

In 1838, a traveller, Lachlan MacLean wrote 'If St Kilda is not the Eutopia so long sought, where will it be found? Where is the land which has neither arms, money, care, physic, politics, nor taxes? That land is St Kilda. No taxgatherer's bill threatens on a church door, the game-laws reach not the gannets. Safe in its own whirlwinds, and cradled in its own tempests, it heeds not the storms which shake the foundations of Europe – and acknowledging the dominion of

M'Leod, cares not who sways the British sceptre. Well may the pampered native of happy Hirt refuse to change his situation – his slumbers are late – his labours are light – his occupation his amusement. Government he has not – law he feels not – physic he wants not – politics he heeds not – money he sees not – of war he hears not. His state is his city, his city is his social circle, he has the liberty of his thoughts, his actions, and his kingdom and all the world are his equals. His climate is mild, and his island green, and the stranger who might corrupt him shuns its shores. If happiness is not a dweller in St Kilda,

where shall it be sought?'

In 1887 Robert Connell observed in his *St. Kilda and the St. Kildians*: 'To discover the socialistic principle you have only to toss a roll of tobacco – an ounce will serve the purpose as well – to the first man that accosts you. True to the apostolic theory of 'all things common' this latter-day Ananias will share his spoil, to the last leaf, with every smoker on the island.'

The men of Hirta (the only habitable island) would meet every morning in what was the daily 'Parliament'. It had no rules, no chairman and participants arrived in their own time. This was a meeting to share information, discuss current issues, resolve disputes, and make decisions, in particular in relation to work that needed to be done. Decisions were reached by consensus. 'Often the proceedings are anything but harmonious, and the loud talking of the men at one and the same moment is suggestive of anything but a peaceful solution. However, when a decision is arrived at the malcontents readily give way, and co-operate cordially with the majority.' Never in recorded history were feuds bitter enough as to bring about a permanent division in the community.

Like the free workers of Jamaica that Marx describes in the *Grundrisse* who, being 'content to produce what was strictly necessary for their own consumption', and how they were portrayed by the plantation owners as idle and indulgent, so the St Kildans were similarly held in contempt by visitors and churchmen for their production just of use-values and their adherence to their home-grown version of communism of directly satisfying needs.

The entire population was evacuated in 1930 and so ended perhaps the longest surviving example of a communistic system in action on British soil.

ALJO

The General Strike: A Weapon of Class War

On the 90th anniversary of the 1926 General Strike we look again at its lessons and at the uses and limitations of this class struggle tactic.

The General Strike lasted from 3 to 12 May in an attempt to defend the miners. It has been claimed that a significant proportion of the union leadership actually feared victory. 'I am not in fear of the capitalist class. The only class I fear is my own,' said J.R. Cleynes of the General and Municipal Workers Union. Trade union leaders were not going to challenge the state even though as the strike continued, more and more control over the day-to-day functioning of society passed into the hands of the strikers. The TUC General Council betrayed every resolution upon which the strike call was issued and without a single concession being gained. The miners were left to fight the mine-owners, backed by the government, on their own.

Most commentators agree that the strength of the strike came from the solidarity of the grass-roots mass support and the weakness from above by an indecisive bureaucracy. 'There's never been anything like it. If the blighters o' leaders here dinnae let us down we'll hae the capitalists crawlin' on their bellies in a week. Oh boy, it's the revolution at last,' said one striker in Glasgow. Revolution was exactly what the trade union leaders didn't want. The General Strike had opened a Pandora's Box and in the words of NUR leader Charlie Cramp — 'Never again!' and said Ben Turner of the TUC General Council: 'I never want to see another.' The trade union activists' shock at the call-off was only matched by the employers' and government's unexpected surprise. 'A victorious army disarmed and handed over to its enemies,' declared another Glasgow striker.

What We Said

The Socialist Party realistically understood that there was no immediate question of revolution. We favoured the general strike for the limited objective of exerting massive pressure upon employers to concede over pay or conditions. We had advocated:

'...combined action by the workers to resist the wholesale onslaught by the masters upon wages and working conditions... that the old sectional mode of industrial warfare was obsolete; that, while the development of industry had united the masters into giant combinations, with interests ramifying in every direction, supported at every point by the forces of the State, representing the entire capitalist class, the division among the workers, according to their occupations, led automatically to their steady defeat in detail. The only hope, even for the limited purpose of restricting the extent of the defeat, lay, therefore, in class combination... economic and political ignorance kept the workers divided and the defeats went on. Yet even worms will turn, and rats forced into corners will fight... There is a limit even to the stupidity of sheep; and not all the smooth-tongued eloquence of their shepherds could prevent the flock from realising that they may as well hang together as hang separately.'

The *Socialist Standard* (June 1926) lamented the TUC's lack of strike plans:

'As an expression of working-class solidarity the response of the rank and file was unquestionably unprecedented; but the long months, nay, years of delay found effect in the official



confusion between 'essential' and non-essential occupations, the handling of goods by some unions which were banned by others and the issuing of permits one day which had to be withdrawn the next. Just prior to the strike the railwaymen were working overtime providing the companies with the coal to run their blackleg trains ...'

In particular, we urged the working class to learn the lessons of the General Strike:

"The outlook before the workers is black, indeed, but not hopeless, if they will but learn the lessons of this greatest of all disasters. 'Trust your leaders!' we were adjured in the Press and from the platforms of the Labour Party, and the folly of such sheep-like trust is now glaring. The workers must learn to trust only in themselves. They must themselves realise their position and decide the line of action to be taken. They must elect their officials to take orders, not to give them! ... It is useless for the workers either to 'trust' leaders or to 'change' them. The entire institution of leadership must be swept by the board." At the time we urged workers that they "must organise as a class, not merely industrially, for the capture of supreme power as represented by the political machine... The one thing necessary is a full recognition by the workers



Punch
cartoon,
19 May
1926

themselves of the hostility of interests between themselves and their masters. Organised on that basis, refusing to be tricked and bluffed by promises or stampeded into violence by threats, they will emerge victorious from the age-long struggle. Win Political Power! That is the first step.'

The general strike as a tactic

The possibility of a general strike keeps cropping up within the trade union movement. When we speak of the general strike we are not concerned with the general strike of a single trade union but of all workers. The movement is no longer a trade union movement but has become a class movement. For the general strike to succeed, the working-class must be convinced of the importance of the purpose for which it is declared. It must be shown that the aim is legitimate and victory is possible. The general strike cannot be a disguise for revolution, but simply the exercise of the right to strike on a wider scale and with a more clearly marked class character. The Socialist Party dismisses the idea that the general strike is a panacea for workers.

The idea of carrying through a social revolution by means of a 'folded arms' policy is romantic. A stoppage of production and transportation is not enough to bring about the overthrow of a society. Strikers will stand idly outside places of work, and even if the workers occupied and took possession of the factories and offices, it is a pointless exercise for they cannot function while the economy is suspended and production is stopped by the universal strike. So long as a class does not collectively own and control the whole social machine, it can seize all the factories and offices it wants to, but it really

possesses nothing. The failure of a general strike involves real suffering, and discouraged and disconsolate, defeated strikers withdraw from the movement into passivity and apathy. A general strike is 'All or nothing!' Workers should think twice about supporting such a gamble.

There are some who seek to transform a proposed general strike against austerity, for instance, into a political general strike, using the opposition to the cuts as the slogans to mobilise around. They expect that because of a sustained general strike the normal economic life of the country will be suspended, and there would be a total stoppage in distribution and in production. Naturally, workers would be forced to adopt more forceful methods in order to live. They would seize food and other provisions wherever they could lay hands on them. The ruling class would respond in kind with repression and so the general strike is envisaged to escalate into a revolutionary scenario. That is the idea of the 'revolutionaries'. But this sort of strategy is a trick to delude the working-class. It proposes to drag them far beyond what was proposed. To imagine that a social revolution can result from misleading workers in such a manner is nonsense.

Although the general strike is quite powerless as a revolutionary means of liberation for the exploited class, nevertheless it is a potent warning to the capitalist class. It tells them if they are crazy enough to make the right to unite in trade unions and the right to strike empty forms, then a general strike may well be the shape that a labour revolt would take. It would be more as a means of damaging the enemy to save ourselves than a means of liberation. The trade union movement has proven itself to be a powerful instrument of a defensive character.

The strike weapon is the workers' only means of defence or attack which it has for the protection of its immediate material interests. Working people are right to jealously guard the right to strike. While the Socialist Party fully supports this right for all workers, it is not our business to incite them to make use of it. It is not for us to urge or discourage strikes. It is for those immediately involved, those who will have to endure the consequences of their decision, to decide without pressure of any kind from outsiders. When those workers whose interests are at stake have decided upon a strike, other workers including socialists ought to aid them to gain every possible advantage from the situation in which they have placed themselves.

That is, generally speaking, what is and what should be the conduct of socialists so far as strikes are concerned. We acknowledge the strike as a weapon, but recognise that its effectiveness should not to be exaggerated and that it possesses limited power. Under favourable circumstances it may compel some employers to yield to union demands but it has never been able to produce any radical change in the capitalist system. Here or there some ameliorations have been achieved but they have not been incompatible with the increasing prosperity of capital.

The political expropriation of the capitalist class today is its economic expropriation tomorrow. To win for socialism the greatest possible number of partisans, that is the task to which the Socialist Party concentrates its efforts. What is necessary is to make socialists, to bring people's wills into harmony with a movement that seeks the election of more and more socialists to our various elective assemblies. The political expropriation of the capitalist class today can be its economic expropriation tomorrow and the transformation of wage labour to the free association of workers and common ownership.

ALJO



The Panama Papers: *All in it together*

Capitalism is an expensive business. In any society where the population is divided between those few who own but do no productive work, on the one hand, and the many who have to work but own little, on the other, it is obviously necessary to build up a powerful and far-reaching state apparatus to protect the owning few. Each country's owning class has to safeguard itself both internally and externally. Internally, it must construct and maintain police forces (overt and undercover), courts, prosecuting machinery, prisons and so forth, in case the propertyless many should rise against them, and attempt to construct a different society – or even just to try and replace the present leaders. Externally, it must construct and maintain armies, navies, air-forces and so on in order to prevent any other country's capitalist class trying to seize part of its property, and also to support any attempt it may make to seize territory at present held by another country's owning class.

All this costs money, a great deal of money. Britain is building a new super-prison in Wrexham, with places for 2000 inmates, at a cost of £250 million. And that's just building it. Apparently it costs about £40,000 a year to keep each prisoner in jail - or £65,000 a year if you include the costs of the police, courts etc. But these expenses, enormous as they are, are dwarfed by the amount a capitalist class will pay out to defend its property from possible attack by foreigners (or possibly to acquire more property from foreigners). The United States is planning to procure a new generation of bombing planes

(to destroy the buildings of hostile countries and kill their citizens); there are 175 of them, the total cost being estimated at between \$40 and \$50 billion (that's somewhere between twenty-eight thousand million pounds, and thirty-five thousand million pounds – which comes to about £100 for every man woman and child in the United States.)

So where will the money come from? The answer becomes more obvious the more you think about it. If you want food, you have to go and get it (and pay for it) at a place where they have food, eg. a supermarket. If you want clothes, you go to a place where they sell clothes. And if you want money, you have to get it from the people who have money. There's no point in demanding significant contributions from all those people who have to work for a living. When the economists examine the finances of people with low and middle incomes, they always say it's a matter of swings and roundabouts. Taxation is demanded from many such people, and many others get various kinds of benefits. At the end of the day, it's merely redistributing the income within that (very large) group of people. Apart from all that, of course, if the working class as a whole did have to pay serious taxes, it would mean much greater pressure for higher pay to make up for it, and in the end the capitalists as a whole would be taking with one hand and having to give back with the other.

All this being so, the money to run the state and preserve it from dangers both internal and external has to come from the capitalists themselves. But while all ruling authorities acknowledge this, and have strict laws in place in order to collect sufficient money from the rich to operate the state machine, the individual capitalists will often be tempted to reduce as much as they can their own personal tax burden. And this is where 'offshore' companies and similar dodges come in. Recently many documents – emails, correspondence etc – have been leaked from an influential law firm, Mossack Fonseca, in Panama. The firm has apparently acted for many wealthy people round the world who wished to conceal money or property from the authorities in their own countries. The leaked data from this single firm make it clear that the further up the power scale a wealthy person is in their particular country, the more they will be tempted to fiddle their tax affairs in such a way that they end up paying very little or

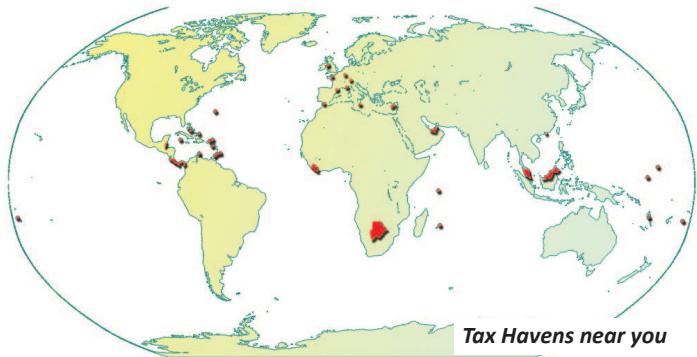


sometimes nothing: like a member of a tug-of-war team who cheers on the others but personally does very little tugging.

One way to make your affairs 'tax-efficient' as the lawyers say (i.e. putting your money where it is safely out of sight of the local tax-collectors) is to establish a company or trust in one of several countries round the world that advertise themselves as 'tax-havens'. Money gained illegally can also be stashed away quietly, since criminals often find it difficult to explain how without any very obvious sources of income, they are suddenly in possession of a lot of cash (a Rolls-Royce parked outside a terraced downmarket house would cause inconvenient curiosity). Through these secretive companies it's possible to 'launder' money, for example when offshore companies (with anonymous owners) buy houses in London's booming property market. 'World leaders, criminals and billionaire sheikhs have secretly poured hundreds of millions of pounds into London properties, leaked offshore data reveals. The cache of documents from a Panamanian law firm confirms the capital as the go-to place for wealthy foreigners and criminals anxious to protect their anonymity and assets' (*Times*, 6 April).

Capitalism is fundamentally the same throughout the world, but local history and local conditions often mean that the local version looks different on the surface. Different politicians have different names for their own version of capitalism – some try to get votes by calling it socialism, some even have the nerve to call it communism – but in fact it is recognisably the same the world over. And being the same, the local politicians share the same desires: how to hide their own wealth, while at the same time getting the rest of the country's rich people to hand over enough of the readies to enable the country's capitalist system to survive and prosper. Here are a few of those listed by the *Times* or the BBC as being connected with these offshore subterfuges, who appeared in the Panama papers – either their own names came up, or the names of family members or close friends:

- **Sigmundur Gunnlaugsson**, Iceland's prime minister (in fact there are links in the data to twelve present or former heads of state or prime ministers); poor old Sigmundur had to resign.
- **David Cameron**, Britain's premier, who is going to host an anti-corruption summit in London shortly; there were also calls for his resignation.
- **Gianni Infantino**, the new head of FIFA (just installed to 'clean up the mess', because of the peculiar financial transactions of the last lot).
- **Gonzalo Delaveau**, head of the Chilean branch of the anti-corruption watchdog, 'Transparency International'.
- **James Ibori**, 'the corrupt Nigerian governor who is known to have bought property across London'.
- **Leyla and Arzua Aliyeva**, who 'are said to have amassed vast business empires' since daddy – President Aliyev of Azerbaijan – came to power in 2003.
- **President Macri** of Argentina.
- Two close associates of **Marine Le Pen**, head of France's National Front.
- A close associate of **President Pena Nieto** of Mexico.
- **Alaa Mubarak**, son of the former Egyptian dictator.
- **Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan**, President of the United Arab Emirates.
- **Mariam Safdar**, the daughter of Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan (and two sisters of hers).
- **Kojo Annan**, son of the former head of the U.N.
- **Kalpana Rawal**, Deputy Chief Justice of Kenya's Supreme Court.



- **Ayad Allawi**, former Prime Minister of Iraq.
- **Dr Saraki**, President of the Nigerian Senate.
- **Rami Makhlouf**, cousin and close associate of **President Assad of Syria**.
- **Li Xiaolin**, daughter of the former Prime Minister of China.
- **Petro Poroshenko**, president of Ukraine.
- **Kim Chol Sam**, a senior official of the North Korean regime.
- Close associates of **Vladimir Putin**.
- Brother-in-law of **Xi Jinping**, president of China.

Plus lots of others: e.g. **Hans-Joachim Kohlsdorf**, former senior executive of Siemens, Europe's largest engineering company, **Michael Geoghegan** the former HSBC boss, **David Hunt**, 'one of Britain's most feared gangsters' according to the *Times*, **Dominic Chappell**, now principal owner of British Home Stores, **Tarek Obaid**, the founder of Anglo-Saudi oil company Petro-Saudi (and a 'leading investor' in a company running a dozen academy-type schools). And, of course, Mossack Fonseca, with 300,000 clients, is only one firm among dozens in the business of helping people to hide away their assets. It will be seen that there are people here from all sides of the various hostile groupings and power blocs into which capitalist countries naturally cluster themselves. They may denounce each other ferociously, but they are all alike when it comes to seeing if they can avoid paying their fair share of the enormous costs of running capitalist countries. The laws operating in each country are very often different, but even so it is quite possible that none of those named broke any laws: it was merely a question of being able to enjoy wealth but not pay taxes on it.

David Cameron appeared on the list because his father, Ian, had operated two offshore trusts, one in the British Virgin Islands, one in Jersey. In 2012 he criticised Jimmy Carr, comedian, who had joined an offshore tax-avoidance scheme: he said it was 'morally wrong'. When asked about Gary Barlow, a pop star, who had campaigned alongside Cameron for the Conservatives in the 2010 election, and who had joined a similar scheme, he said he hadn't had time to look into yet; though he had found sufficient time to give Barlow an OBE in 2012. So it's a little embarrassing that Cameron and his wife bought shares in his father's off-shore fund in 1997 for £13,500, and sold them thirteen years later for £31,500, two-and-a-half times as much – a very acceptable profit made through offshore trading. Not to mention that Cameron's education (Eton, fees now £32,000 a year, and Oxford, where Cameron joined the Bullingdon Club – dress-suit to wear at club dinners: £3,500) was presumably paid for by his father's offshore activities.

So it seems that's how 'morally wrong' can be financially right.

ALWYN EDGAR

Socialism and *Climate Change*

That global climate change has been caused by the excessive emission of carbon dioxide, (CO_2) since the Industrial Revolution is now accepted by the worldwide scientific community and (as the attendance at the Paris international conference, COP 21) in December last year indicates) by the ruling political class of all countries as well. Though there are still important reservations and much follow up work will be required, the agreement at the Conference to limit global warming to 2 degrees centigrade (2°C) above pre-industrial levels was a breakthrough regarding tackling the huge problem of climate change.

Stabilisation

However, it does raise the question of how the countries of the world are going to go about this formidable task. One practical approach worth recalling is that proposed by Socolow and Pacala (*A plan to keep carbon in check*, R H Socolow and S A Pacala, *Scientific American*, July 2006). The key features of this are shown in the figure which is a graph of carbon (i.e CO_2), the dominant greenhouse gas derived from burning fossil fuel and released into the atmosphere over time. The straight line labelled BAU (business as usual) shows a fairly straight line increase from about 1.6 billion tons carbon per year (BtC/y) to 7 BtC/y^* over the period 1956-2006 followed by a straight line extrapolation for the next 50 years. It is a basic assumption in Socolow and Pacala's analysis that the level of production of goods and services will go on unabated and steadily increase as it has in the past. These emissions have led to a buildup of CO_2 in the atmosphere from about 280 parts per million (ppm) before

the industrial revolution to 375 ppm in 2006 to 400 ppm today and when it reaches about 500 ppm a rise of 2°C is likely to occur.

What Socolow and Pacala address is how to use existing technologies to bring about a reduction in the amount of fossil fuel (coal, oil and gas) used to power society and so limit the increase in global warming to 2°C . In the first instance the objective is to hold emissions at 7 BtC/y for the next 50 years. The area, marked ABC on the figure, between the BAU line and this steady level is called the stabilisation triangle. Socolow and Pacala further divided the stabilisation triangle into 7 wedges, each representing the same amount of CO_2 emissions. (The wedge is a convenient unit because its size and time scale match what specific technologies can deliver). Socolow and Pacala identified 15 technologies each of which is equal to the task of removing a wedge of emissions of CO_2 . They were careful only to use tried and tested not 'pie in the sky' technologies and excluded improvements that are currently taking place. The idea is that one of the 15 technological solutions is applied in a controlled manner to eliminate a wedge of CO_2 release.

So let us take for example one of the technological solutions proposed, carbon capture and storage (CCS). The process involves the capture of CO_2 from coal fired power stations in a liquid solvent, then compressing it before transporting it by pipeline for burial deep underground, i.e. putting it back where it came from. In the first year this would reduce power station emissions by 0.5 Bt of carbon. In the second year more plant is introduced and a similar reduction is made so by the end of the second year, 1.0 Bt of carbon from coal-fired power stations would have been diverted from the atmosphere. And so after 50 years the target of no increase above current levels from this source of CO_2 would have been achieved and a total of 25 Bt of carbon would have been prevented from entering the atmosphere. Socolow and Pacala's work indicates that CCS plant would need to be installed at 800 large coal-fired power stations to achieve this target, a not inconsiderable engineering feat. The same approach can be applied to the other six wedges of CO_2 emissions. The outcome would be that over the next 50 years or so CO_2 releases/year would be held at the level of 7 BtC/y .

For this level of CO_2 release into the atmosphere, global warming as predicted by widely accepted climate change models, would continue to increase before leveling off at around 2°C above pre-industrial levels. After this, to ensure this temperature rise would not be exceeded, further wedges would be required to drive down CO_2 releases.

Other technologies identified by Socolow and Pacala for eliminating a wedge of CO_2 release include:

- Increase fuel economy of two billion cars from 30 mpg to 60 mpg
- Replace 1400 large coal-fired plants with gas-fired plants
- Increase solar power from photovoltaic electricity to 2000 Gw of installed capacity.



- Forest management. Reduce cutting of primary tropical forest to zero over 50 years. Reforest hundreds of millions of hectares in temperate and tropical zones.
- Cut electricity in homes, offices and stores by 25 percent by making them more efficient.
- Increase wind power to replace coal with 2 million * 1mw peak wind turbines

Since the proposal by Socolow and Pacala in 2006 the release of carbon has now increased from 7 BtC/y in 2006 to 9 BtC/y today. This does not alter the basic idea of the wedge concept. But it does highlight the years wasted when little action was taken and it could mean that 9 wedges would now be needed. However the wedge strategy remains an eminently practical approach to the problem but one that would require an enormous effort and an unprecedented degree of cooperation worldwide to bring about.

The Red Wedge

The question is: can capitalism deliver? Or more pertinently what could be done in a socialist society? In socialism a similar approach could be adopted to the one outlined above with one big advantage. On the advent of socialism a considerable reduction in CO₂ emissions would be obtained by ending the enormous wasteful economic activity and production inherent in capitalism. Principal contributors to this waste are the maintenance and preparedness of the armed forces and occupations and products handling money. The enormous sums of money spent on the military represent the use of land, facilities, machinery, materials and human resources to keep it in a constant state of preparedness for and participation in war. The Socialist Party's own publication *From Capitalism to Socialism* provides a list of dozens of occupations and products for the financial system as diverse

as accountancy, advertising, banking, income tax officers, VAT inspectors, stock brokers, stock exchanges, banknotes, armoured cars, gas and electricity meters, postage stamps, tickets and TV licences. Socialism would eliminate the need for these industries and thereby rapidly introduce a large cut in power generation and consequent CO₂ emissions to the atmosphere. This would serve to relax the onus on (i) the introduction of the mitigating technologies discussed above and (ii) enable the power generation required for the pent up demand for improved living standards in the developing world to be met.

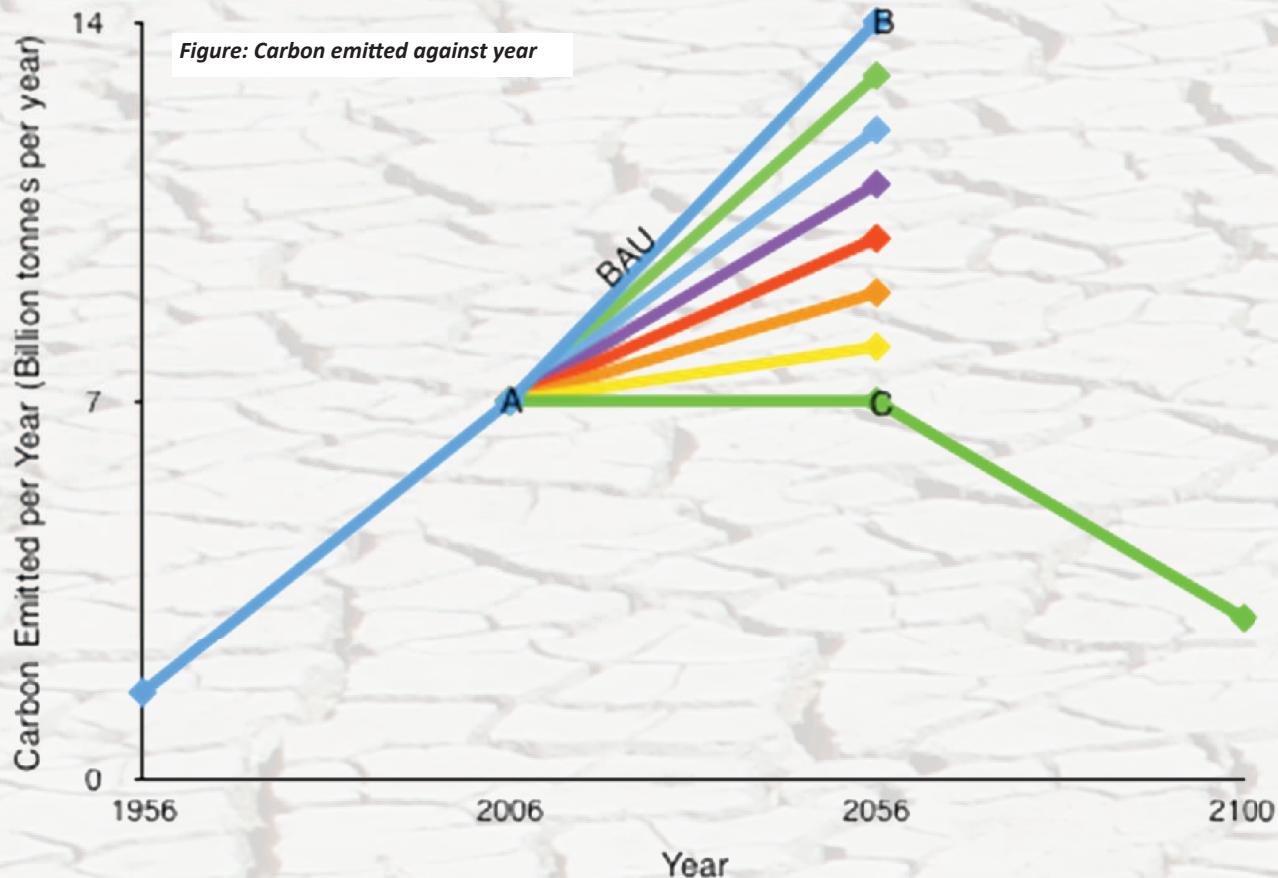
Following Naomi Klein's analysis of the politics of climate change (*This Changes Everything*, 2014) it is difficult to believe that capitalism will heal itself, notwithstanding the apparent success of COP 21. It is hard to disagree with her conclusion that the opposition of the hugely powerful companies with vested interests in fossil fuels will be too great for any government(s) to overcome.

To conclude, in the first period of socialism clearing up this mess left by capitalism would be a priority project. However it is certainly the case that despite the reduction in CO₂ emissions that would be brought about by socialism, the introduction of the wedge strategy would still be a necessary and formidable challenge, but surely one that would be grasped wholeheartedly in a sane, socialist world.

Finally to quote Socolow and Pacala regarding the future 'Critically a planetary consciousness will have grown. Humanity will have learned to address its collective destiny - and to share the planet'. Let us hope so.

TONY GLUCK

*A billion tons is 1000 million tons. As in reference 1 the units of release are expressed as carbon not CO₂. One ton of carbon is contained in 3.67 tonnes of CO₂.



Making Nationalists

The world is divided into almost 200 different countries and most of them celebrate some type of annual 'national' day.

The most widely known examples are the 4th July Independence Day of the United States and Bastille Day on 14 July in France. Mexico has its 'El Grito' in September which celebrates the beginning of its struggle to end Spanish rule and Cuba has its Liberation Day to mark the advent of the Castro regime. Britain is unusual in not having any widely recognised national day although the Queen's Official Birthday and St. George's Day (at least in England) partly fulfil the role. In Ireland, St. Patrick's Day on the 17 March is generally accepted as the national day (especially in the Republic) although Easter Monday (the date of the Rising



Above: the 1966 commemoration of the Easter Rising. Right: Eamon De Valera, survivor of the Rising

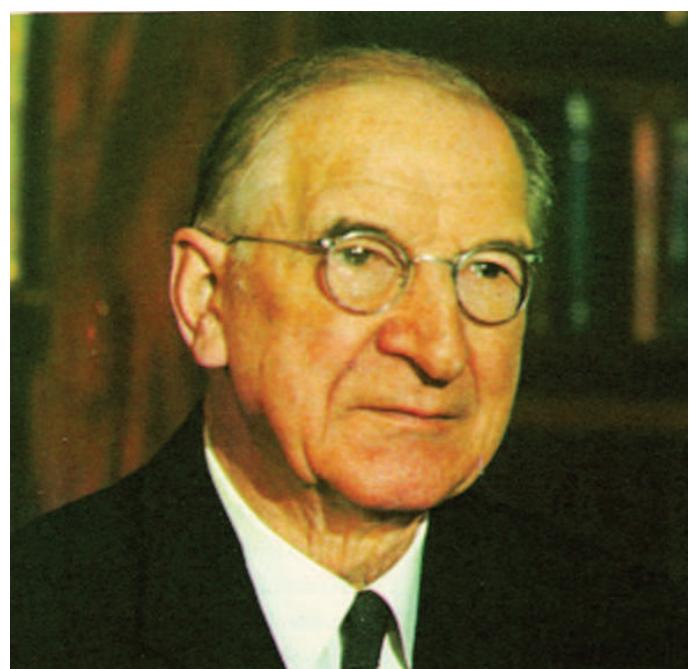
in 1916) is also a calendar date of importance. National days usually commemorate the formation of the country in the sense of gaining 'freedom' from a governing colonial power, as in the case of the USA, or else mark some major change (erroneously called a revolution) in the social structure of a country as with France. Sometimes they have their roots in and take their context from cultural, religious or historical events. For countries that have experienced much social and political upheaval over the last 100 years, such as Germany or Russia, the day considered as the national day, has changed many times over the years.

In Ireland, this year being the centenary of the Easter Rising, the day was given a more pronounced significance. For the previous year, the government planned a whole series of ceremonies with the major commemorations held on Easter Sunday and Easter Monday; 27 and 28 March. What's a socialist perspective on this? As the articles in the March Standard suggested, in spite of all the rhetoric of the state and media, there really is very little tangible to see in the day-

to-day lives of the citizens of the Republic of Ireland that is connected to the Rising apart from the fact that most major railway stations in Irish cities are named after some of the leading participants.

It's interesting to compare this centenary celebration with the commemoration that occurred in 1966 on the half centenary. The centrepiece on that occasion was a traditional old style military parade of the Irish Army down O'Connell Street in Dublin whilst being reviewed by Eamon De Valera and other elderly survivors of the Rising. Watching old film of it is very reminiscent of observing the May Day parades that the leadership of the Soviet Union indulged in with the massed ranks of marching troops, the armoured columns and the flypasts of combat aircraft. Of course for Ireland, the military hardware on show was on a much smaller scale. For this year's anniversary, the aim was to be much more 'inclusive' with family events, educational lectures, historical re-enactments, street festivals, etc. Of course the underlying nationalist message was still present though in a more muted form; an example being that in the weeks prior to Easter, the Proclamation was read out in all school playgrounds under the Tricolour.

The correct attitude to adopt to the Rising has always been somewhat problematical for Irish Governments. While Irish Independence is nominally taken to have begun with the rebellion, in fact the origins of the state really date from the unplanned and erratic series of events that occurred from the Conscription crisis of 1918 to the end of the Civil War in 1923. The undemocratic and vanguardist nature of the military operation of Easter 1916 has unpalatable parallels with the more recent campaign of the Provisional IRA. In fact during these more recent troubles, apologists for the Provisional movement liked to justify their struggle against claims that it



had little popular support by reference to the minority action of 1916. The authorities in Dublin were keenly aware of this and certainly during the 1970s and 1980s there was little official observance of the date on any grand scale.

The participation of James Connolly in the planning and execution of the Rising has always given it left-wing appeal even though he was in a clear minority in terms of his political outlook compared to the other leaders. Connolly had an admirable record prior to the Rising as a social agitator and resolute campaigner against capitalism and militarism. The other leaders, while some of them had vaguely progressive ideas, were more straightforward cultural nationalists who envisaged the new state that would be formed as replicating other nascent European nation-states. For many of them, the aim of the Rising was to give Ireland its own flag, anthem, currency and language; the usual trappings of a sovereign capitalist nation. A well-known phrase from the Proclamation 'cherishing all the children of the nation equally' has since been used to vindicate the claim

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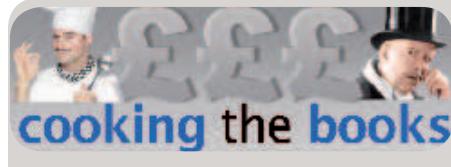
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that it was a progressive event even though that wording was placed there more for grandiose political purposes than a call to any specific programme of social action.

What's the view from today? It can be debated over and back whether the 26 counties that eventually went on to form the Republic of Ireland would have been better or worse off if they had remained as part of the UK. It's a calculation

continued page 18



... and when demand exceeds supply

THERE IS a housing shortage in London. Or rather, paying demand for accommodation in London exceeds supply for sale, which is not necessarily the same thing. There are probably enough buildings in London to house everybody, certainly enough so that nobody need be homeless or live in accommodation without basic amenities. The Times (12 April), for instance, reported:

'A growing glut of luxury homes in inner London could encourage developers to turn them into offices, according to a report that says the total floor space of top-end apartments in the pipeline would be enough to cover Hyde Park.'

Where paying demand exceeds supply for sale prices go up, in the case of housing, rents and house and land prices. Those on lower incomes tend to lose out, having to either cut back on food or move to an area where rents are not so high. This can cause problems for the smooth operation of capitalism as many in this position are essential workers who need to live near where they work.

Various ways of dealing with this problem have been tried. Council housing was one, providing subsidised

rented accommodation for workers but this has virtually been abandoned, with priority now being given to people who councils have a legal obligation to house. Rent control was another but, by making investing in house building and renting less profitable, leads in the long run to less private rented housing being provided and to landlords not maintaining their property.

The current model is for local councils to sign deals with private profit-seeking developers to provide some 'affordable' housing in their projects. 'Affordable' is



defined as a rent of below 80 percent of the going market rate, which is still unaffordable for many. The property developers naturally seek to maximise their profits, but the more affordable housing they are required to provide the less their profits. This places a limit on how far councils can push them. If pushed too far they can just walk away or, as often happens, plead rising costs to reduce the previously agreed percentage of below-market housing.

During the mayor of London elections

some of the candidates made promises to increase the supply of cheaper housing that, given this model, would be undeliverable as they would make house building less profitable for developers. Sadiq Khan, the Labour candidate and ex-MP George Galloway both promised to ensure that at least 50 percent of new housing would be affordable. They also promised to redefine 'affordable' at a lower level of rent, so making house building even less profitable.

The 12 April *Times* also reported on 'flipping' where property is bought 'by investors who have no intention of living there or renting them' but bank 'on price rises to resell at a profit before construction is complete. The flipper secures the right to buy a home with a deposit and then sells that right to a second investor for a higher price. They pocket the difference.'

Because housing is produced for profit there is no possibility of a rational approach to housing within capitalism. As Engels pointed out as long ago as 1872:

'As long as the capitalist mode of production continues to exist, it is folly to hope for an isolated solution of the housing question or of any other social question affecting the fate of the workers. The solution lies in the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the appropriation of all the means of life and labour by the working class itself' (*The Housing Question*).

Obituaries

Frank Duncan

It is with great sorrow that we report the death of Frank Duncan, a stalwart socialist and a fascinating man. He joined the Glasgow branch in 1944, just after he had played a key role in organising the Glasgow apprentices' strike. An Apprentices' Charter, produced by the Clyde strike committee in 1937, had called for apprentices to have day release for technical training and the right to join a trade union. When these demands were flatly refused by the employers, Frank and his fellow apprentices went out on strike. During this period he attended open-air meetings in Glasgow, found the logic of the case for socialism irresistible and joined the Party.

He later became the supervisor of the telephone exchange in Cricklewood, North London and joined Paddington branch. Frank was a great cyclist (taking annual cycling tours of the Canary Islands), a huge enthusiast for brass band music and a regular attender at concerts of many kinds at the South Bank in London.

I first met him in the 1980s when, after a period of inactivity, he threw himself back into energetic activity as a member – and then long-time secretary – of Islington branch. To say that his energy was not easy to keep up with would be an understatement. Frank was someone who was a 24/7 socialist; everything he said or did referred to his deep principles. Everyone who knew him knew what he was all about. He had a great influence on the many young socialists who joined during that period and played a pivotal role in several election campaigns in Islington. His knowledge, enthusiasm and playful sense of humour will be missed.

SC

Peter Newell

Our comrade Peter Newell died suddenly on 16th February. He was 90 years old.

Like many others of his generation, Peter first came across the Party at Speakers' Corner in 1946. At the time, he was a member of the Communist Party, although he left that early the following year. After a period of extensive reading – Peter never did anything half-heartedly or without forethought – he joined our Party as a member of Fulham branch in 1952. He wrote many articles for the *Standard*

during the 1950s, under his own name and later as PEN – his entirely apt initials.

Originally a draughtsman, in the early '60s he sought a change of career and became an employee of the Post Office, where he was active in the Union of Post Office Workers. Peter felt his union activities conflicted with his membership of the Party and this, together with personal and family problems, led to his resignation in 1964.

Edgar Hardcastle ('Hardy'), also a member of our Party, was the head of the research department of the UPW. Hardy suggested Peter write for *The Post*, the union's journal. Hardy and Norman Stagg, editor of *The Post*, fed Peter with material for his column 'Bellman's Roundabout'. Much of this came from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, which, it was later revealed, turned out to be a CIA front group. Peter was approached by the ICFTU and attended several international conferences in the early '60s. He clearly knew something was amiss for his association lasted only a few years, however it sparked a lifelong interest in espionage which culminated in his last book *America's Secret Island*, which was published last year.

In the 1970s, Peter moved to Colchester and became a Drainage Technician for Colchester Borough Council, keeping records of sewers. As for many socialists, paid employment was merely an incidental part of his life, however he was a conscientious worker, always willing to do his bit.

At this time, Peter was writing extensively for *Freedom* and other radical journals. He was co-author of Freedom Press's *Fighting the Revolution* (1972) and sole author of *Zapata of Mexico* (1979). His chief association was with the short-lived Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists, whose journal was *Libertarian Struggle*. This was a Platformist group, inspired by the Ukrainian revolutionary Nestor Makhno. Peter wrote ORA's Aims and Principles, which drew on our own Declaration of Principles.

Peter rejoined Central branch in 1992, being a founder member of Colchester branch, now the East Anglian Regional branch.

He will be remembered for his informative articles in the *Socialist Standard*. He specialised in foreign affairs and was particularly knowledgeable on the history of our companion parties, writing a history of the Socialist Party of Canada, *The Impossibilists*, in 2008. His last article appeared in last month's issue.

Peter was a quiet and unassuming man. He was profoundly afflicted by tinnitus from an early age, which led to his

exemption from military service. He was uncomfortable at meetings, being unable to hear what was going on. Despite his lack of foreign languages, he travelled extensively, particularly enjoying his trips to Mexico, where he bravely visited remote locations associated with Zapata. He enjoyed music and was a well-known member of the local jazz club. Additional interests included philately – he wrote a guide to the stamps of Alderney and had a fine collection of handmade Tibetan stamps – and family history, his *Symond Newell and Kett's Rebellion* (2007) dealing with his relative's connection with the peasant revolt of 1549.

Our commiserations are extended to Dominique, his long term companion.

KAZ

Making Nationalists continued

that has been and continues to be put forward to the Scottish people by the governing SNP in Edinburgh. To an extent it's similar to the current debate in the UK about its own membership of the larger European political union. While we constantly hear that we live in a globalised world, national sovereignty still resonates with many people.

As socialists we reject the concept absolutely. The delineation of national boundaries within a system of world capitalism is just a reflection of the nationalist consciousness that currently prevails amongst the people of this planet. The celebration of national days, the supporting of the national team at international football tournaments, the organised remembrance of common history etc. are all manifestations of the constant encouragement to us to make identification with our fellow countrymen as the primary determinant of our political consciousness. This is a false proposition. The problems of the Irish people were not solved by independence; the hundreds of thousands of emigrants who left Ireland since 1922 are proof of that. The same will hold for the Scottish people. In the long term, the maintenance or relinquishment of membership of the EU will not improve or worsen the overall position of the majority of the people of the island of Britain. As socialists we say the only political allegiance we should give is to our fellow workers and our objective should be to finish with countries and their bogus 'national' days.

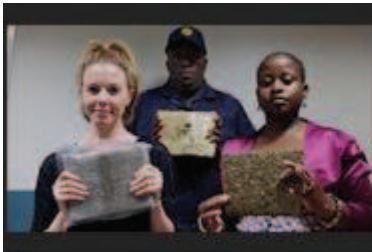
KEVIN CRONIN



Legal Highs And Lows

BBC3 is easy to overlook in its new online-only home, even though this is probably how we'll watch more channels in the future, as the boundaries between television and the

internet blur. Online, the channel can group together similar broadcasts, and their stash of shows and articles about drugs looks at the issue from some interesting and imaginative angles. Their titles follow the BBC3 tradition of a tabloidish, eyeball-grabbing headline which suggests the programme is going to be tackier than it turns out to be: *Meth And Madness In Mexico*, *Why Are Women Putting Cannabis In Their Vaginas?* and *Whoopi Goldberg Wants To Cure Your Period Pain With Weed*. More blandly titled is their *Drugs Map Of Britain* series, which in its first episode visits the people in Wolverhampton aiming at *Getting Off Mamba*.



Series 6: 3. The Cannabis Smugglers

Stacey investigates the new strains of cannabis being smuggled into Britain from Africa.

known type; a few years ago it was mephedrone, aka 'm-cat' or 'meow meow'. Others have names such as 'happy joker' and 'holy smoke', their packets marked 'not for human consumption', which used to be enough to protect the manufacturers from legal comebacks about the drugs' downsides. One downside not shown in the documentary is a 'mamba attack', an extreme reaction to the drug which tends to involve being disorientated and losing bodily control, which in practice can mean collapsing and being unresponsive or acting aggressively or erratically.

Perhaps because of BBC3's reduced budget, *Getting Off Mamba* isn't complicated by a narrator or commentary from professionals. The camera follows Liam, who smokes mamba every few hours, and says it 'makes you feel nice. It makes me forget about things that I don't want to think about, like being homeless, having no family, no friends, no help, no nothing'. He and many others use it as a coping strategy for the pressures of effectively being on capitalism's scrapheap. The rough sleepers and vulnerably housed people featured in the show all recognise that using mamba doesn't really help them deal with their situations, and instead makes matters worse. Another mamba smoker, Bruce, says it has sapped his motivation and self-esteem as well as draining his money. In other circumstances, drug use can be more enriching, but not when it's wrapped up in an otherwise unfulfilling, restricted lifestyle.

Mamba is a 'legal high', now more formally called 'new psychoactive substances' (NPSs). These are synthetic versions of other drugs, produced by the kind of entrepreneurial spirit we're supposed to admire. The manufacturers of these substances found the gap in the mainstream market left by the trade in drugs like heroin, cannabis and cocaine being illegal and therefore underground. As new psychoactive substances differ chemically from other drugs, they weren't covered by existing legislation, until the introduction of the 2016 Psychoactive Substances Act. Before the change in the law, NPSs were openly sold online and in 'head shops', meaning they could reach a wider audience than other drugs, and therefore rake in the profits. Mamba, an artificial approximation of cannabis, is probably the most well



Series 6: 2. Ecstasy Wars

Stacey follows the trail of Ecstasy from Asian forests to inner city American drug dens.



Series 6: 1. Meth and Madness in Mexico

How the battle between meth drug cartels, police and vigilantes is overwhelming Mexico.



The Truth About... 3. Crime, Carnage and Cancun

Stacey Dooley visits Cancun to discover the dark side behind the Mexican party resort.



The Truth About... 2. Sex, Stags and Prague

Stacey investigates a stag's last night of freedom and what really happens in Prague.



The Truth About... 1. Booze, Bar Crawls & Bulgaria

Stacey investigates Sunny Beach in Bulgaria, the new party destination for young Brits.

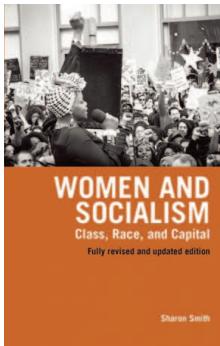
Liam decides to get support to come off mamba, and visits 'SUIT', one of Wolverhampton's substance misuse services. He meets with Sunny, who has recovered from addiction and now helps others do the same. He and Liam talk about how staying off drugs means making changes to different aspects of his life, such as how he spends his time and who he associates with. An update at the end of the show tells how he's avoided using mamba and is on a work placement. *Getting Off Mamba* is less exploitative of its subjects than many of the similar documentaries which followed in the wake of *Benefits Street*. But it still approaches them in a distant, slightly patronising way, which veteran drama producer Tony Garnett has likened to anthropologists studying 'natives'.

New psychoactive substances (NPSs) aren't really all that new, but have become more widespread over the last decade, encroaching on the popularity of heroin, cannabis and cocaine. Some people have switched to NPSs from using traditional drugs because of their increased availability, and the decline in purity of traditional drugs is probably another factor. Producers dilute drugs with cheaper (and often harmful) substances in order to bulk out the deal and make more money. For them, this becomes a false economy when users turn to something else they hope will be more effective, such as mamba. The drugs market will change again with the introduction of the Psychoactive Substances Act, which makes it illegal to produce or supply NPSs. This won't magically make demand for them disappear, so their manufacture and use will be driven underground, like other drugs. Nor will the change in law remove the pressures of poverty and homelessness which lead some people into problematic drug use. For Liam and the others in *Getting Off Mamba*, drugs have been a coping mechanism which hasn't solved their underlying difficulties. Similarly, reforms like the Psychoactive Substances Act are just coping mechanisms which also don't address the deeper causes of the drugs problem.

MIKE FOSTER

Votes for some women

Women and Socialism. Class, Race, and Capital. By Sharon Smith. Haymarket Books. 2016



This is a 'fully revised' re-edition, with a new subtitle, of a book with the same title that came out in 2004 by an American Trotskyist. In the meantime Smith had revised her previous

derogatory attitude towards 'middle class feminists' (who merely want equality under capitalism). She also wanted to emphasise more her view that there is a need to unify feminist and black struggles.

One interesting fact that emerges from a couple of passages is that we were not alone in opposing the suffragettes, who were demanding votes for women on the same terms as men then had, for wanting 'Votes for Rich Women'. Some in the German Social Democratic movement took the same position in regard to the same demand in Germany (where universal male suffrage did not exist either). Smith tells us:

'... the early-twentieth-century German women's suffrage movement did not challenge the property requirements that denied working-class men the right to vote – knowing that such requirements would also deny voting rights to working-class women. Maintaining such property requirements could only strengthen the political weight of the middle and upper classes, while the working class would remain politically voiceless.'

and

'Some women's suffrage organizations demanded (and in some European countries, won) partial suffrage for women – with voting rights based upon property holding and the payment of taxes (that is, restricting voting rights to those women of financial means). But in many of these same societies, male suffrage was also partial, denying working-class men the right to vote. Thus, partial suffrage merely increased the voting power of the upper classes.'

In the USA universal male and female suffrage was instituted in 1920 but only on paper in the ex-Confederate States where black men let alone black women were excluded under various pretexts, an anomaly not put right until

the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Smith sees not insisting on this at the time as a failure on the part of earlier feminists which, she argues, should now be rectified by seeing the black and women's equality movements as part of the same struggle. Multi-identity – gays and lesbians are invited to join too – politics, if you like, instead of class politics.

She argues that the basis for women's equality has to be pay for housework. But this is not going to happen under capitalism and won't be necessary in socialism where people won't have to have a money income to access the goods and services they need. Instead, the principle 'from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs' will apply, a much better and more rational way of putting women and men in a position of equality in that respect.

ALB

being used as a political weapon.

The thirties saw Depression, unemployment and the Means Test, and the number of servants increased slightly, as women whose fathers were out of work had to find employment somewhere. Families were broken up, and many people slid down the social ladder, with apprenticeships rarely leading to a skilled job. By the mid-thirties, things were improving for many workers, though by no means all. Mass production on assembly lines was a new development, imported from the US.

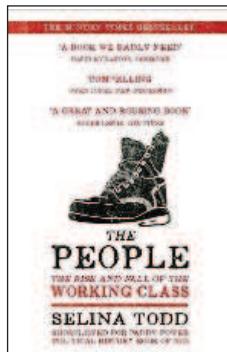
The Second World War was 'the people's war', and many workers benefited from increased wages and job security. Their lives improved even more after the war, with higher wages and 'full employment'. One area where there was little progress, however, was housing, with not enough houses built and council housing generally inferior to private building. By 1951, the metal industry employed 15 percent of male workers. By the late fifties, many working-class families experienced a reasonable standard of living, but only if they had two parents working overtime and relying on debt, especially hire purchase.

From around that same time a cultural revolution took place, by which being working class supposedly became fashionable (as seen in novels such as *Room at the Top*). In the late sixties, workers became readier to strike for higher wages, and many women got involved in rent strikes as council rents rose. In the eighties, the government attacked unions, most notably in the miners' strike, and cut social security, leading to increases in inequality. It was no longer clear that children could look forward to better lives than their parents had known. By 2000, 70 percent of workers were employed in non-manual work, yet a growing number of people saw themselves as working class.

As this suggests, there is a lot of useful material here, enlivened by reference to, and quotes from, surveys and interviews with workers, many carried out by Mass Observation. But there is an unfortunate tendency to romanticise the post-1945 era and exaggerate its ongoing effect on the lives of the great majority. We are told that '[b]etween 1945 and 1951 the lives of working-class people greatly improved', but then that 'the 1950s were a decade of insecurity and fear for many people'. And the book is a bit naive in places, such as the claim that by the end of the seventies the main political parties had made a 'decision to govern in favour of capitalists rather

But Which People?

Selina Todd: The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class. John Murray £10.99.



This is intended as a history of the working class in the UK from 1910 to 2010. Although Todd's view of who counts as working class is not always clear, she appears to see it as primarily manual workers, so only part of the story is presented here. However, she is quite right when she describes class as 'a relationship defined by unequal power, rather than a way of life or an unchanging culture'.

The narrative she provides can be summarised as follows. In the early part of the last century, there were nearly one and a half million domestic servants, the largest group of workers. Factory workers tended to be regarded as unskilled (and so lower-paid) if any of their work involved using machinery. In the First World War, domestic servants almost disappeared as women went to work in munitions factories and joined unions; they often resented being forced back into 'service' after the war. The defeat of the General Strike meant that the labour movement supposedly became committed to constitutional change, with workers' strength not

The Rhubarb Triangle

Hepworth gallery, Wakefield

In case you have never heard of it, the Rhubarb Triangle is an area between Wakefield, Morley and Rothwell, where the soils and climate are particularly suitable for the growing of rhubarb. Though much reduced from its heyday in the 1930s, the rhubarb industry is still going strong, and provides one of many examples of locally-sourced food that has been boosted by the celebrity chef culture. Yorkshire Forced Rhubarb



Rhubarb sculpture, Wakefield

has Protected Designation of Origin status from the EU (like champagne and Parma ham), though this is something that growers have to pay for. Much of the rhubarb is grown by small family firms, and the younger generation are often less keen on the backbreaking work involved. A larger company with over thirty workers relies mostly on migrants from eastern Europe, and also welcomes coach tours as a way of increasing interest and profits.

Currently the Hepworth gallery in Wakefield is hosting a display of photos of the Rhubarb Triangle by Martin Parr. These make clear the hard and dirty work that is part of the special techniques required: the plants grow in fields, get the right amount of frost, and are then moved to darkened sheds. Global warming may mean a lack of frost and so disrupt the harvests. There are photos too of the coach tour visitors, and of Wakefield Council's annual Festival of Food, Drink and Rhubarb, complete with someone dressed as a stick of rhubarb and walking

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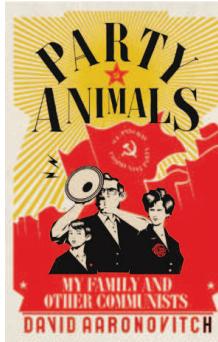
than in the interests of the majority of the electorate': when was it ever any different?

An afterword takes the story up to 2015, and is in some ways rather more convincing, as in the statement that 'class arises from the conflicts between different groups, who are defined primarily by their relationship to the means of production. In capitalism, the profits of the few depend on the exploitation of the many'. A consistent approach to class, with little or no reference to a vaguely-defined middle class, would have made this a better book.

PB

Family Circle

Party Animals: My Family and Other Communists. By David Aaronovitch. Jonathan Cape. 2016.



Aaronovitch is not, it is fair to say, universally popular as a political columnist but this book shows another side to a quite complex individual, centered on his upbringing and in it.

early life in the Communist Party of Great Britain. It is for the most part engaging and well written and there is much here that anyone familiar with radical and revolutionary politics will be able to identify with.

His father was Sam Aaronovitch, a working class full-time Communist Party official who later became an academic, while his mother Lavender was a radical activist and equally fervent in her leftist and pro-Soviet views. They were contemporaries of well-known CPGB activists like John Gollan, Jock Nicholson and Peter Fryer, and Aaronovitch deftly analyses their North London social and political milieu. This book is an attempt to explain why they thought as they did and to explore the cultural environment and reference points of those who set themselves in this way outside the mainstream of society. In this respect, it is a personal exploration of what it means to be 'the other' and how political ideology was reflected in music, holidays, food eaten and a range of other ostensibly non-political activities that were nevertheless impacted by the sense of being different and apart from

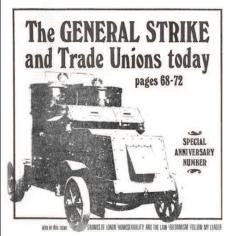
the mainstream.

While the CPGB had its own distinctive internal culture and identity it would be churlish to deny there is a wider resonance here of sorts, including with organisations like the SPGB that have had a similar ancestry in the self-educated working class 'autodidactic' tradition. This has been a tradition often at variance to the prevailing attitudes and codes of behaviour in society (from say, negative feelings towards religion, to refusing to sing the national anthem at school).

In some respects there are interesting parallels with the approach taken in Alexei Sayle's *Stalin Ate My Homework*, though compared to Sayle what this loses in humour it perhaps gains in terms of psychological insight. Aaronovitch is impressive in his analysis of psychological attitudes and responses in the CPGB towards the Hungarian Uprising of 1956 (including why some members left at this time while others reconciled themselves to stay), the Czechoslovakian events of 1968 and then the long decline of the CPGB from the 1970s. He takes in the split with the hardline so-called 'tankies' in 1977 and the final dissolution of the organization in 1991 with the founding of the Democratic Left. But by then the Party had been over for him for some time and this book is the culmination of many years – decades even – of soul-searching about his upbringing and involvement in it.

Some of what emerges about Aaronovitch's family background is clearly uncomfortable (his father was an adulterer and it appears that the family were the thinly-disguised subject of a chapter in a well-known book by the psychologist Robyn Skinner, consequent on a series of family therapy sessions they had with him). There is a sense of some score-settling too as the book progresses, though this doesn't detract too much from what is an otherwise insightful work. It is mainly an autobiographical and sociological account rather than an expressly political one perhaps, and it would have been interesting to have explored more closely at times the political assumptions that lay behind the belief in so-called 'actually existing socialism' in the Soviet Union and its satellites. For this was not a 'socialism' that degenerated over time, but a complete mirage from the outset, and one the CPGB were at pains to promote and uphold despite all the evidence to the contrary from 1917 onwards.

DAP



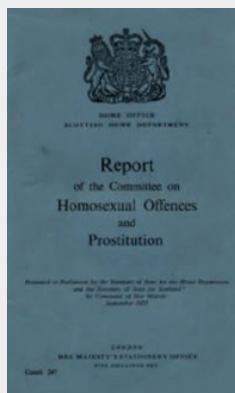
50 Years Ago

The Law and homosexuality

WITH THE election out of the way, Wolfenden — or rather his famous report — may get back into the news again. This document, presented to Parliament in September 1957 after more than three years of painstaking work, called forth at that time a mixed public response of support and violent opposition. The government of the time fairly quickly implemented the committee's main recommendations on prostitution (incidentally with a resultant increase in call-girls and a more highly organised poncing system), but did not make any move concerning the law on male homosexuality. (...)

In May last year, Lord Arran managed to get a second reading in the Lords for his Bill to make private homosexual acts between consenting male adults no longer a criminal offence. But a similar measure introduced into the Commons a fortnight later by Labour MP Leo Abse was defeated, the opposition to it having been led by that self styled guardian of our moral

welfare and champion of intolerance Sir Cyril Osborne, Tory MP for Louth. However, not long before the election, a Bill on the same lines was sponsored by the Tory Humphrey Berkeley and managed to survive a second reading. (...)



When the law is eventually changed, then, a minority will be released from the shadow of vindictive penalties (although only in one provision of Wolfenden is this so; his proposal for the under twenty-ones is that the penalties be retained and in some cases even increased), but this will not be the end of the homosexual's problems. Apart from the backlog of fear, ignorance and prejudice which will impinge on his life still, the legal change will at most be an offer to absorb him, so to speak, more easily

into the present set up. Which will mean, if he is a worker (and most homosexuals certainly are), that the grey day-to-day existence and struggles to make a living will still be there.

(From article by E.T.C., *Socialist Standard*, May 1966)

ACTION REPLAY

You'll Never Walk (Out) Alone!

LIVERPOOL FC fans walked out in protest at increased ticket prices during their home game against Sunderland earlier this season. In the 77th minute with Liverpool leading 2-0, droves of their supporters left the stadium annoyed at the proposed new ticket price of £77.

Nobody at Fenway Sports Group (FSG), the club's American owners, could have foreseen the reaction of Liverpool fans to the price hike to meet the cost of a new main stand.

Ian Ayres,
the Chief



Executive, completely misread the supporters mood when calling their actions 'disappointing' adding 'what's affordable for one person isn't for another...I've no doubt 200 people would be happy to pay £77 for a seat.' Plainly, it's not the sort of comment that will endear him to the Scousers.

Jamie Carragher, a former Liverpool player joined the walkout. He stated that Liverpool generate around £35 million in ticket prices, had FSG announced a freeze on prices when the stand was completed the revenue would have risen

to £37million — all this for the sake of £2 million for the eighth richest club in the world.

Alan Shearer, former England International, backed the fans commenting: If you are a parent with kids and you want to take them to a game, the cost would be horrendous for a normal working family.

Fenway Sports Group later issued a letter of apology to the fans, signed by senior FSG figures: John W Henry, Tom Werner and Mike Gordon. FSG expressed concern that the supporters may perceive them as greedy, stressing they have not taken a penny out of the club and have invested £1m on a new stand and invested considerable sums of money to improve the squad

However we need to look at the perennial failure of the Premier League to regulate the game. Generally speaking, many of the premier teams, some who have a sole owner, seek maximum revenue from ticket prices whilst the Premier League is awash with £8.3 billion in TV revenues.

Various measures have been mooted to quell some fans' disenchantment, e.g. imposing caps on away prices; maximum charges and percentage increases; plus funnelling some of the massive TV revenue to reduce ticket prices. Otherwise, it is argued, we may face a situation where increasing numbers of fans are forced to watch football on TV because ticket costs will have priced them out of the football stadiums.

KEVIN

Exhibition Review continued

around greeting the kids.

The exhibition also includes plenty of other examples of Parr's work, going back a period of forty years. The earliest are in black and white, of chapels in places such as Hebden Bridge and Todmorden. From the 1980s are photos of workers on holiday in New Brighton, which were apparently criticised by some as 'class voyeurism', with a successful photographer providing unsympathetic portrayals of less well-off workers. These are perhaps balanced by photos of Tory supporters at parties and celebrating election victories. There is no doubt, though, which set of people look more alive.

Parr's main interests have been in depicting people at work and at leisure; this exhibition — on until 12 June — provides an excellent overview, and includes some remarkable self-portraits in various guises (and it's worth checking out martinparr.com).
PB

SOCIALIST STANDARD INDEX FOR 2014

For a copy send 2 second-class stamps to: The Socialist Party, 52 Clapham High St, London SW4 7UN

Meetings

For full details of all our meetings and events see our Meetup site: <http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/>

CLAPHAM, LONDON

Sunday 1st May

Stall and leafleting for GLA Elections from 11.00 a.m.. Socialist Party premises, 52 Clapham High Street, London, SW4 7UN.

NELSON, LANCASHIRE

Sunday 1st May, 11.00 a.m.

Walk in the Country. Meet at Nelson library.

BURNLEY

Monday 2nd May

May Day Rally from 1.00 p.m.

Venue: Townley Park, Holmes Street, Burnley, BB11 3RQ. The Socialist Party will have a stall at this event.

SWANSEA

Saturday, 7th May from 10.00 a.m.

Saturday 14th May from 10.00 a.m.

Saturday 21st May from 10.00 a.m.

Saturday 28th May from 10.00 a.m.

Street Stall. The Quadrant, SA1 3QW.

BRIGHTON

Brighton Discussion Group

Tuesday 10th May, 7.30 – 9.30 p.m.

Venue: The Brighthelm Centre (Pelham Room – First Floor – lift available), North Road, Brighton, BN1 1YD

CANTERBURY

Saturday 14th May, from 12.00 Noon

Street Stall. In the Parade pedestrian precinct

MANCHESTER

Saturday 14th May, 2.00 p.m.

The EU Referendum

Venue: The Unicorn, 26 Church Street, Manchester, M4 1PW.

LEEDS

Sunday 22nd May, 1.00 p.m.

Yorkshire Regional Branch. The Victoria Hotel, 28 Great George Street, Leeds, LS1 3DL

June 2016

SWANSEA

Saturday 4th June from 10.00 a.m.

Saturday 11th June, from 10.00 a.m.

Saturday 18th June, from 10.00 a.m.

Saturday 25th June, from 10.00 a.m.

Street Stall . The Quadrant, SA1 3QW

CANTERBURY

Saturday 11th June, from 12.00 Noon Street Stall

In the Parade pedestrian precinct

LEEDS

Saturday 11th June, 1.00 – 5.00 p.m.

CROSSING BORDERS:

Nations, Migrations and Exploitations Day School on Capitalism in the Real World.

Venue: The Victoria Hotel, 28 Great George Street, Leeds, LS1 3DL

Speakers: Brian Gardner, Paul Bennett, Paddy Shannon.

EC Meeting

Saturday 4 June, Socialist Party's premises, 52 Clapham High Street, London, SW4 7UN. Correspondence should be sent to the General Secretary. All articles, letters and notices should be sent to the Editorial Committee.

Folkestone area Discussion Group

If there is anyone interested in the formation of a Discussion Group in the Folkestone area, contact: spgb.ksrb@worldsocialism.org or phone: 07971 715569.

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Declaration of Principles

This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation

of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Revolutionary romantic

'A TV interior designer and curators at the William Morris Gallery were among the speakers at a school's exhibition and celebration of his life last week. Over 330 people crowded into the chapel at Forest School in College Place, Snaresbrook last Thursday (March 24) on the artist's birthday for an evening of talks and an exhibition of his work. One of the guest speakers was TV personality Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen, who is part of the campaign to put Morris on British bank notes ahead of the 200th anniversary of his birth in 2034' (guardian-series.co.uk, 31 March). What a silly way to celebrate the birthday of a Marxian socialist, author of the Socialist League's manifesto – upon which our Declaration of Principles, written some 30 years later, drew heavily – countless pamphlets and polemics and the utopian novel *News From Nowhere*, which describes what life could be like in a *moneyless* post-capitalist world of common ownership and democratic control.

Ferengi-free future

Morris and those who founded the Socialist Party would likely be astonished and appalled that worldwide capitalism continues into the 21st century. Even the confused James Connolly saw over a hundred years ago that the day for patching up the capitalist system had passed and that it must be replaced. Yet we must not despair as more recently groups and individuals who would not necessarily describe themselves as socialist embrace ideas that are clearly part of our tradition: 'what makes Star Trek particularly attractive for many viewers is its progressivism. Star Trek depicts a future where the scourges of sickness, racism, poverty, and war have been eradicated on

Earth and throughout much of the Federation, an inter-planetary alliance of which the Earth is a founding member. The elimination of poverty, hunger, and wage slavery has resulted from overcoming capitalism, markets, and currencies' (dissidentvoice.org, 1 April). Add to this books such as *Life Without Money and Treconomics: The Economics of Star Trek* and we just need to convince those excited by a world of free access and production for use to join our movement and make it so.

War and want

'Weapons spending worldwide increased in 2015 and now stands at a mind boggling \$1,676 billion, according to new data released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute today. This 1% increase from 2014 marks an important shift: since 2011, military spending stayed at more or less at the same level. It is now going up' (greenpeace.org, 5 April). War is endemic to capitalism as is poverty. Ending the latter would cost just a fraction of the wealth spent on weapons: 'eradicating extreme poverty and hunger – two of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by the United Nations in 2015 – may seem far out of reach. But, according to a new study, it could be done with about ten percent of the world's military spending' (commondreams.org, 6 April), yet, armageddon aside, ending war and want can only be achieved in a world without wages.



Chinese capitalists

The Panama Papers are a reminder that the 1 percent, like capitalism itself, exist worldwide. They also add another nail to the coffin of Chinese so-called communism. 'Directly connected to Xi is his brother-in-law, Deng Jiagui, who is named in the documents. Deng married Xi's elder sister, and it was reported in 2012 the couple already held hundreds of millions of dollars worth of assets including real estate and shares. In 2009, at the time that Deng was the sole director and shareholder of two British Virgin Islands-based firms under Mossack Fonseca's purview, Xi was rising within the Chinese Communist Party, en route to becoming its head. The documents also name Jasmine Li, the grand-daughter of Jia Qinglin, a top ranking official in the Communist Party. Li reportedly received her first offshore company as an undergrad at Stanford University, and through a number of complicated ownership agreements, Li was able to hide her holding of several offshore companies (mashable.com, 5 April). Putin, his family, and entourage have also apparently stashed funds overseas. Joshua Kurlantzick adds to the socialist nail gun: 'the most serious threat from state capitalism is that the two big state capitalist authoritarian powers, China and Russia, will use their state companies as weapons in conflicts with other countries, as vehicles to control certain types of natural resources, as vehicles for obtaining and stealing sensitive technology from other nations, or as tools for undermining environmental and labor norms in countries where their state companies invest' (*State Capitalism: How the Return of Statism is Transforming the World*, OUP USA, June 2016).

FREE LUNCH

